

by Bill Crews

In contrast to the things taught in a previous article from last week, **what do various churches of today teach** about how a lost person is saved?

Many teach that a person becomes lost as a result of his own sins, the sins he has chosen to commit or has committed in ignorance. But a majority of churches teach that a person becomes lost by inheriting the guilt of Adam’s sin, along with a fallen or depraved nature. That the former is the truth is shown by the fact that everywhere in the New Testament people are depicted as lost because of **their own sins**, in need of salvation from **their own sins**, and always said to be saved from **their own sins** — not the sin of Adam. That the latter is false is clearly shown by Ezekiel 18 (please read the entire chapter and note verse 20); Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 7:9; Luke 18:16-17.

What The Roman Catholic Church Teaches

The Roman Catholic Church embraces the doctrine of “original sin,” by which they refer to the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and from which they argue that all of their descendants are “born in sin” with the guilt of that first sin upon them. They baptize babies (actually they do not baptize babies, but only pour a little water upon their heads — compare Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12 and Acts 8:38) to save them from that sin. They also teach that babies who die without such “baptism” cannot go to heaven, but must be sent to “Limbo” (an imaginary place which they have invented). The doctrine of “original sin” is based upon a misuse of Psalm 51:5; 58:3 and Ephesians 2:3; that God would place the guilt of one upon another should be repugnant to us.

What Many Protestant Churches Teach

Protestant churches which have embraced Calvinism teach: (1) that all people are born “totally depraved,” “opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil,” (2) that only those who have been unchangeably and unconditionally foreordained by God unto eternal life can be saved (all the rest, they say, have been unchangeably foreordained unto eternal damnation), (3) that when Christ died on the cross, He died only for those who have been unconditionally foreordained unto eternal life (they call this “limited atonement”), (4) that when God, in His own time and in His own way, chooses to save those who have been unconditionally foreordained unto eternal life, His grace will always prove to be irresistible, and (5) that all who have been saved from their sins can never thereafter be lost (they call this “the perseverance of the saints”).

What Other Protestant Churches Teach

Some accept Calvinism in part. Nearly all teach that the guilt of Adam’s sin is passed on to all people and, therefore, that all people are born lost (not necessarily “totally” depraved, but with a fallen “nature”). But many then teach that if anyone dies in that lost condition while still a baby or a little child, the blood of Christ will then automatically save him from that sin and guilt.

Most Protestant churches teach that accountable people are saved by grace alone on God’s part (then what about God’s love, God’s mercy, Christ’s blood, etc.?) and by faith alone on man’s part (then what about repentance, confession, baptism, etc.?). This is usually described as “accepting Christ as your personal Savior” or “accepting what Christ has already done for you.” They emphatically deny that man is required to do anything, thinking that if he has to do something, then his salvation would be a matter of merit rather than grace. But when the New Testament makes any reference to salvation by works of merit on man’s part, it is always referring to the hypothetical and impossible situation of man obeying law to such perfection that he never commits any sin and never referring to man meeting any divine condition of salvation (see Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16; 3:10-11; James 2:21-24).

The Church of the Nazarene teaches that sinners must in penitence “pray through” for salvation. They think that some receive forgiveness and salvation after praying for but a short time, and others only after long and repeated attempts. The success of “praying through” is judged by subjective feelings. In the New Testament nowhere are alien sinners taught to pray for salvation. Saul of Tarsus, in fact, who was

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